

Manal Aduyan, what an honor to be here in community and speaking with you today. Thank you so much for making time to participate in this conversation.

I am so honored to speak with you. So good afternoon because I know you said you're in London in the afternoon. Here's the morning for us. How are you doing today?

Pretty good (chuckles). Thank you for inviting me to speak on this podcast.

Thank you so much. I'm so honored. I'm interviewing women artists around the world and learning so much and it's just my pleasure, my honor. So I want to start with you kind of looking backwards, thinking about your discovery of your artistic methodologies. The discovery of artistic methodologies usually involves a lot of experimentation. And I just wanted to know if you could talk about how you gravitate towards the mediums that you work in?

I think of mediums that I've used uh over the years were not very intentional in the way that I was not intentional the way I chose them. Actually, it's what I had access to at that moment of time. And it remains still till today. I don't have a specific medium that I can say is mine and I've perfected it and I love it and it's the only thing I use. I actually keep changing up the kind of mediums I use in my art to the point that it becomes very challenging uh...in every cycle so that I'm reintroducing myself to a new media, the way it behaves, the way it looks when it's painted, when it has glue on it, when it stands in a public space or it's just sitting in a well-preserved white cube of a gallery, these are just, it's constantly changing. And I think this is just uh me. I like the challenge maybe of not feeling so confident within uh the work that I do and it allows me to be curious. Eh It gives me spaced experiment and make big mistakes and it's humbling. (laughs)

Where do you think you get this approach or this mentality around experimentation about humility of uhm experimentation?

I have no idea. Let's look at just the examples. Photography was the first medium that I've started working with, which is printing in the darkroom. I had, back then, camera was very accessible to everyone. Darkroom was not. And so I had access to a lot of printing materials in Saudi Arabia. When I came back from my studies, I had learned how to do darkroom printing in London and uh came back to Saudi and nobody was doing it. And so I would find a lot of the materials, paper, chemicals. And then suddenly the company that was making all of this, which was Kodak, stopped making it. And it really shocked me because I was using it for about three or four years. It was my main medium. And of course, it didn't stop completely in the world. So uh another company picked up the slack of Kodak, but then it really sort of shook me. I was like, okay, let's not make, let's not get married to this material forever because I bought all the stuff, all the chemicals, all the papers that existed in South European (oh wow) and had it shipped to my studio to use. And then I started thinking, okay, maybe this is not a good idea to bank on just one material. Also, black and white printing, as generally speaking, as an art form, umm making photographs was very two-dimensional. I loved it. It was a

language. Material really, in my practice, when I make art, is part of the concept of the artwork. So it's not standing separate and doing its own thing.

And back then, I...in 2003 to 2005, photography really spoke the language I needed in art making. I think after I made those collections a bunch of artworks in that medium, I felt like, no, I need another layer.

And so I started silk screen printing on my prints and then adding neon lights and spray paint. And then I was like, you know what, I don't want it in a frame at all. Like, I just felt like the frame was an obstacle of some sort that, that you know, between the viewer and the artwork. So I started making printing on aluminium with no frames at all. And I think then I transitioned into maybe I should do full experience artworks, you know, you go in physically with your whole body (u hmm) and you can touch it. Man, this is a big no-no on the art world, but for me, I love, like, you know,

just go ahead and touch it. And that's how it evolves. So material was always a medium, has always been a journey for me. It's part of making the artwork. It's part of the context that I'm in. Sometimes I believe, you know, in 2019, I was living in Spain in Madrid. And, you know, I started looking around me and I thought, my God, weaving is huge. And so ceramics, things that I've never incorporated in my work. I went out and worked with a craftswoman who did the weaving with me. I also learned how to use ceramics and kilns. And so Now, till this day, I still use these kinds of materials because I started that experiment in that those circumstances.

Wonderful. It's so funny you mentioned Kodak because I grew up in Rochester, New York, the headquarters of Kodak. My father was working at Kodak as a scientist. So I grew up in that, in that community. So shout out to Kodak, shout out to Rochester (laughs). But uh sorry, what happened? Yeah, didn't go so well (chuckles) So yeah, you brought up that you've traveled to Spain and in other places. And I wonder if you could just elaborate on the role that travel has played in your artistic practice.

Well, these days when I'm traveling extensively, I feel like, is there a way to make art that speaks to multiple communities around the world without travel?

And I don't know, I don't think this exists. I don't think you can just stay in your cocoon and hope that your, your language, your voice, your uhm visual language will travel ever from the confines of your studio. It's it's very strange because you think about your environmental footprint, you know, getting on planes, jumping from here to there, also the physical impact that it has on my body. And do I want to continue to do this? But definitely what I can tell you is traveling the world has transformed how I look at myself, my art, and what I think of what humanity is. And I look at it as a planet, you know, and I'm just one human in this planet. Uhm It takes you out of your own safe space and challenges. Some of your ideas about cultures, about people, about food, about language uh and geography. It's just, I would prescribe it as a medicine. Oh, I love that. If I could. Yeah, I love that you're thinking about me. Go meet other people. Go.

Yes, I love that you're thinking about the body, the holistic process in your aesthetic journey. Can you reflect back on your schooling experiences as a child and a young adult? How did these shape who you are as an artist today?

Well, definitely my school, my schooling was a very weird one because I lived in a uh compound that belong to oil workers in Saudi Arabia. I was born there. And like you, you have a community or a culture, the Kodak culture (laughs). We have something we're called Aramcons, which is a culture that belongs to a company. But the people that work in that company really have their own rituals, traditions, language, and a collective memory, I guess, of that experience in a moment and time. And so children that are born onto that camp are called Aramco Brats. There's a website out there about Aramco Brats. There's a movie done by children that were born on the compound. And part of that experience was the Aramco schools, which were English schools taught by American teachers. So it's an American sort of like project (hmm). And when... And I went to school young, I started off in the English language schools. And then my parents decided, you know, her Arabic is not going to ever develop. They taught a little bit of Arabic in the school. And they... really Arabic was a very important factor in identity in my culture. So they said, fine, you're going to join, go into Arabic schools. And so I started going in the mornings to public school in Saudi Arabia and afternoons I would come home and do English schools and afternoons. And you know the different styles of teaching what was happening in my country back then it was uh you know late 70s early 80s is when I was in school and that was when also it was a very religious time a very the girls school and education was led by Muslim scholars rather than academics. And so it was really complex things happening around uh younger manal (chuckles). And one of the, like an example of it is that in art class in Arabic school, I would, I used to draw whatever I wanted. And then at some point in the 80s, we were not allowed to draw anything that uhm looks like a living being. So like animals and humans (hmm). But you still draw it, you can draw it, but you have to cross out the neck because you don't want to, somebody thought that you're going to imitate God in his creation. Therefore, let's make sure that Manal is drawing doesn't turn into a living thing (hmm). And so I would cross out the necks of these animals and humans. And then eventually they, it was forbidden to draw anything with life in it. Then I go back in the afternoon and draw whatever I want in English school. And I tend to use the drawing of, I put a dove usually with lines with a lot of my artworks. Since 2009, I think it's made an appearance in many, many artworks. Until this year, I had an artwork that I made that also incorporated. And I now call it an ode to my art education, this symbol of crossing out the neck. Obviously, these rules have been removed now and saturated children can make any art they want and, you know, the contemporary art movement is booming and being supported. So I think that the symbolism of this transforming dove with a line through its neck over the years and how it started off as non-existent, then I have to do it and then I incorporate it into my artworks and now I'm having a conversation about it as if it's something from my history (wow)... I think it's a fascinating way to look at.

That is truly fascinating. Uhm... I was wondering if you could talk about your decision to pursue a master's degree in computer science. I read that you said you made this decision for your father.

So can you discuss your decision to pursue a master's degree in computer science while doing your art on the side until you got a residency that allowed you to switch to art full-time?

Yeah. So I do have a second master's, which is in an art also that I got from the Royal College of Art. That one eventually I got on my own. But when I was young, getting ready to go to study undergraduate, study at a master's degree, all the women were my generation is the only generation. I demand reparations, what we say. But my generation of women didn't have scholarships. um And the generation right after me was when women were given scholarships and it never stopped. But for me, the person that would have paid for my education was my father. And when he was asking me, "Where do you want to study? What do you want to study?" I wanted to study art. And I told my father that I wanted to study art. But back then there was not a single museum in my area. There was no galleries. There's no artists that I can point at and say, I want to be like that. And my father really believed in his daughters having an income, independent income of their own uhm to empower them in this crazy life. And so he was like, I'm not going to have you studying something that will not secure you a job and, you know, protect you from whatever. (chuckles) And so it was like, if you're going to go off and study and I'm going to pay this much money, you're going to study something that is related to the future (laughs) and the future is computers. And, and you have to understand, my father's from a generation that didn't write emails and he was, he worked in the oil company. He's, he has a master's degree of his own, but the computer for him was really, really exciting. And so I went, "Hi, I'll study computers," whatever, as long as I get to travel and live abroad. And so I started my undergraduate in Boston, in the USA in America. uh hmm

And then later on, went off to do a master's degree in London. I was already working in the oil company. By the time I went to London, that master's degree was funded by the British Council. So I got a scholarship, but from an external entity, not my country. And then eventually after the years of doing my art, and I was quite successful with my art career, but I really desperately wanted to go back and see what this art school is all about. I think it was uh something that just sat in my heart and really gnawed at me. And so I applied on my own, paid my own tuition, and went to the Royal College of Art in London. And yeah, that was my journey in education.

Wow. I can relate to that because I also, I was very interested in science growing up. And so I started out thinking that's what I was going to do but in my heart, I knew I wanted to go to art school and it was like, when, when would I go and I ended up going to NYU, to school of the arts for undergrad.

Yeah. It was such a great experience. So I consider you to be a quite intensive researcher. So can you talk about the role that research plays in your work? And how do you approach your research? How does your research translate into your artistic production?

Yeah, I think I like you. I've always had fantasy of being a scientist, (laughs) an academic, a person that goes through all these journals and, you know, thinks deeply about. So there's always been a leaning. (uh hmm) I do love thinking about my projects deeply. The concept comes before the form in my art. And so I cannot make an artwork. Yeah, I've made some artworks, but

really the ones that I love and I feel very confident about and powerful are the ones that really have a lot of thinking behind them. And so whether it's academic research or social work that sort of introduces me to what the community that I'm working with and the public art that I'm going to put among them and they have to use it

at some point. I need to understand what language the community uses, what their issues are. And I can't just parachute on top of their situation and just say, here's an artwork by... And so research has become sort of a safety net. Uh,

It informs a lot of the decisions I have to make because art making is a series of decisions. Do I include this? Do I exclude this? Do I use this fabric? Do I use this sound? And so research helps me make decisions better and quicker and more elegant the way I present an artwork that has good research behind it. So yeah, I've done, you know, I don't know if you can still have my husband as an academic. He would freak out (laughs) if he gave, I were to tell him that I described my work as this kind of high end academic research, but I do, I do, I do a hybrid. I do a hybrid. Like I listen to songs, I watch videos, I talk to people.

That's research. - I read books.

- Exactly. - Yeah. We're validating multimodal research over here.

- All right, awesome, Jacqueline. Thank you for validating.

Yes. So your work has consistently and profoundly expressed the female experience, specifically where you were born in Saudi Arabia. There's a series of portraits that I am, they highlighted the traditional expectations of Saudi women versus their expanding societal roles. In another work, Esmi, you movingly had Saudi women write their names on a large pair of beads and reclaim their very identity silenced by men. Can you discuss these works and your leaning towards contemplating the female experience? Participatory art came to me with no knowledge. There's a genre or the other people have done this before it was very, very, very instinct, any natural instinct for me. So uhm in Saudi Arabia, the years that I was growing up, of course, now it's quite different. And I keep saying that because a lot of people love to live in one kind of situation when in reality it's constantly evolving and changing. But there was a moment in Saudi Arabia where segregation was huge not only was it by law, but also traditional Arab families really didn't enjoy mixing men and women together. So it was very, very natural that I grew up in women-only spaces. And I know that traveling and conversations and reading women-only spaces in the Middle East are interpreted by the West as very oppressive, as limiting. And the reality is so different.

Jacqueline. So these spaces were where the matriarchs of the family till the babies would hang out. So this is where uh very important conversations that are political. We speak about our bodies openly. Voices were very, very prominent and loud. And the presence of your body was acknowledged. It occupied the space. And so this is where I grew up. And when the time came for me as an adult to make artworks, there were specific topics that are very, very difficult. Now they seem very easy to talk about, but when I was making them, there were red lines around what you could say and what you can't say about, you know, what you don't like about your society or to debate uh specific things, taboos, for example.

And so I always use this as an example, but instead of singing alone on the stage, I invited 100 women to sing with me on the stage. (beautiful) and that way, it was not so hard because it's horrible. I have a horrible voice, Jacqueline. (laughs) So I would have never, ever succeeded.

So do I. I always like when we sing happy birthday, I go in the background. (laughs)

Exactly. And so, you know, and collective singing is also something that I love to look at and listen to and think about a lot. But that's what I did. This is like sort of the approach or the reasoning or this is now after making these works, I'm going back and thinking about why I did it this way. And for example, *Is Me*, the artwork that you talk about is the first parts of story work in all its entirety. So I am is a part story work because only I invited women from my community of women, friends and sisters to pose for me and collaborate on that artwork. So that was the first one. But the larger ones where I took my work and traveled across Saudi with hundreds of women participating that started with ISMI in 2012. I was watching a TV program with my mother. It was like a candid camera style and the the introducer or whatever the person that works for the candid camera would walk up to men in the street and you know shove the microphone into their face and say what's your name? Where are you from? What do you do? What's your mother's name? And they all burst into laughter because he almost said it. He almost just let us slip out and oh they laugh and and I was I was blown away. I was I was like, what? Why did they find it so shameful? And then I took this question to my friends, my brothers, my colleagues. And it turns out that men were very much afraid and embarrassed to say women's names in men-only spaces. And it turns out that children in boys-only schools used it as a bullying technique. So if I find out your mom's name, and I'm gonna write it on the chalkboard. Everybody will know and then you should feel a lot of shame that you don't wanna even, it's bullying through your mom's name. (ummm ummm) And so I thought that was insane and insane. I just couldn't believe it. And you know, I took the question to the women who are raising these men, these boys (ummm) and I said, when we held sessions in the Eastern province, which is where I'm from (uh hmm), And it was, I think about 150 women came. That was the first one. It was in a charity space. My mother used to work in a charity (uh hmm) called the Daughters of the Gulf. And I asked them if I could use one of their halls. So they're like, okay, come on in. And they invited all their members. They totally trusted me. This is a community that only knows me as me. Does not know what art or contemporary art, what a social statement is. So I had a huge responsibility about how I represent them, but how do I stand alone if needed to defend the work? (hmm) And I don't have enough beads to go around for everybody because I needed to travel to Rhea, the Jetta afterwards. And so a lot of women were like, "It's fine, we'll just sit in the room while you do this." And so there is a huge energy happening and exchange. And I presented my idea for the first time by telling them, you know, listen, The Quran has no issue with our names because you know in religion women's names are peppered uh everywhere you know you find it in the Quran and in Prophet Muhammad's speeches and talks and then all right the next thing that people usually blame is the Bedouin culture nomadic culture Arabness brings this kind of restriction but in reality in Arabic tribes almost all the children have the same last name. So the way they differentiate between one person and others by their mother's last name. And so they always say like Manal the daughter of Bozia. You know, what's your mom's name Jacqueline?

Melody.

Jacqueline the daughter of Melody.

I love that.

And so there's no issue here. Situating yourself. Yes. And so this is a we came to the conclusion. This is a newfound taboo that is invented as a contemporary way of dealing with the presence of women in society. So it belonged under the umbrella of let's cover your face, lower your voice, and maybe just erase your name and have no place in our society. And you know, I brought it to women and I was like, what do you think? Look how it was, they're like, give me the beads and then people were or making, it was the first time I do a part story session. I had a microphone and it turns out that a lot of women wanted the microphone (laughs). They want to make their own declarations. And (oh wow) so I'm like, I'm going to go stand in front of my son's school with a, you know, with a card and black card and with my name on it (oh wow). And I'm going to talk to my sons about this. And, you know, then stories about their grandmothers and their names and how they came. And conversations really, really evolved from this. But then I took this artwork to three other, two other cities beyond the Eastern province and the same happened. That's... And then I felt energized. And that was the first major moving kind of participatory work. But ever since then, I just, I think I was addicted to the energy.

I feel energized just hearing about it. Oh my gosh, that's amazing. Um, and also I wanted to point out, you know, participatory is a whole methodology and research. And so now I'm going to add participatory researcher to your uh repertoire. Definitely. uhm Wow. Okay.

So what future are you imagining for Saudi women? Do you perceive that there has been progress since your early work?

Yeah, it's undeniable. Undeniable. I used to not be able to drive. Now I drive. I had to have a male guardian sign my papers in order for me to travel. Now I don't. I used to need a male uh guardian. Actually, the guardianship rule was a really dark umbrella on women's movement, uh hmm education, opening businesses and bank accounts. And this has been completely removed. Religious police has been dismantled since 2016. Scholarship programs are equal 50/50 boys to girls.

Oh, wow.

Women's employment when I was working from 2000 to 2010, women's employment in the kingdom was at 3%. Today it's in the low like early 30s, 30%, 32%. That's huge. Huge.

yes yes

The whole of when I go back to Saudi now because I live between Dubai and London. I'm still shocked. I'm still shocked. I can't believe it. Like I go into the supermarket and see the checkout girls and I just walk up to them. I'm so proud of you.

wow

When I go to the movie theater, I was staying in a hotel in Jeddah recently, and the reception and the spa and the restaurant were all women employees along with men. (uh hmm) oh wow And I just walk up to them from so proud. They're all like looking at me like, okay, calm down. Because the younger generation really just, it's a bit blurry to them uh (hmm) the experiences that I went through and my reactions are a bit over.

I can only imagine how that is for you to go back and see all those changes. Yes.

Why do you have high ambitions? Absolutely. Absolutely. So a lot of your work is large and I just wanted to hear you discuss the role that scale plays in your work?

I have no problem with scales. So scaling up and scaling down, this is, I enjoy it. Again, it feeds into the conversation of the artwork. Some artworks that I made this year are, you know, as big as my finger in size. I have several artworks that are small, you know, a little bigger, and then all encompassing my next artwork that is planned in the North City of Alula, Northern City in Riyadh. One of the largest artworks I'm making, just planned for the next two years, is in a city in the north of Saudi Arabia called Al-Ula, where they've discovered these tombs that are now protected by UNESCO heritage and They've given me a valley and two mountains, it's a space for an artwork. So that's just a small town, the scale of the artwork.

So scale really needs to speak to the concept of the artwork, and that's it. I never think this show is going to be all gigantic work. Or this, yeah, it's not part of thinking. But that said, making art in large sizes, which can spill into installation art and more public art, is really complex. Needs a lot of thinking. You have to understand why you're doing it in this size. Is it relatable? Will people love it? Sometimes a huge size is what a space needs because it becomes a marker, something that you look at when you're sitting in your office and you look through your window and you see it and you feel comfort because you recognize it day in, day out. And sometimes it could be horrific. It could be something that people are very offended by and feel an invasion of their space with this artwork. An artist has to be very, very delicate about scale.

- uhnn uhnn Wonderful. So I have two more questions. Your most recent collection, 'their love is like all loves, their death is like all deaths', is the full circle moment of your personal processing of the newly discovered history of Saudi Arabia? Can you expand on this and also discussing you know what brought you to this work and how it has been received? - This artwork, I consider it a chapter. That is like, it's a chapter that leads to the large artwork that I'm making in Alula. So I've had a relationship with this small town in the North of my country. I've been going there since 2012 when I first presented my ismi beads in Jeddah. They took us on a day flight. So you go in the morning, come back in the evening uhnn to these heritage sites. They were just opening them up. They were discovered years and years ago, but they were closed to the public uhnn. We went as a sort of the first batch of people to interact. And I loved it. I felt such a strong connection. And I've been exploring why since then. So 2012 till today, I've been looking at my relationship of why do I constantly go back to this space and why am I always thinking about the Nabataeans, the DadaKnights, the Lahyans, which is three kingdoms buried on top of each other in the Arabian desert. They were traders. They had the connection with ancient Egypt and



Rome. Their political capital was in Jordan, Petra, but their spiritual capital was in Saudi Arabia. uhhh Saudi Arabia's borders, before of course, after it existed. And, you know, it became sort of a moment where you examine your own history as a human. And you understand that you belong to a larger narrative, a larger story. And where do you stand in this story? That's my realization and sort of journey that I'm going through with Al-Ula. So from my relationship with Al-Ula, I somehow was gifted a wonderful commission to build this massive land art project, which is one of the first, one of the first, because I had made a smaller one in Al-Ula, which was a series of trampolines for Desert X Al-Ula, which is sort of a collaboration between an American public art type of land art commissioning entity from California came out to Saudi Arabia. And we did this wonderful, maybe 17 artists produced artworks responding to the landscape. uh And then right after that, Al-Ola came to me, the Royal Commission, and asked me to make a larger, even more complex work. And I am so worried about, like I said, putting a large scale artwork within the community without really building a connection with them uh hmm and building an understanding between me and them about why I'm bringing this artwork to them and it's a gift for their community and work. And so I started a research, a long-term research, which I have put in chapters. The first chapter was my at-talk. I gave it to Riyadh at uhmm Misk Art Institute, where I just examined the idea of standing at the ruins. And this is a very famous poetic trope used in for almost over 2,000 to 3,000 years in the Arabian lands where poets stand at the ruins and recite poetry, and how they approach the concept of ruin. Obviously these people have been seeing the tombs of Alola for a millennium now, uh hmm and we just hear just their poetic interpretations and how it moved them by just looking at these tombs. And that's the only thing that we have to look at today is their poetry. And that was my first chapter. Second chapter was making art, responding to my feelings as a human being, as an artist, as a person that encounters a new history in their own land at this age. hmm And so I made that their love is like all loves, their death is like all deaths. Series of artworks, I presented it in Madrid because the gallery that represents me is based in Madrid. So I said, let's start there. And uhm it was received in different ways. The Spanish people in Madrid have seen four solo shows of mine. And I feel really I am building a language and a connection with the community. It's incredible. This is some, it's a space that didn't understand me, didn't speak my language. They might have already preconceived uh hmm stories about who I should be uh hmm and what I should represent. And for me to take that on as a challenge was also part of my journey as an artist, really to what will happen when I present my artworks in Saudi Arabia or in the United Arab Emirates or Bahrain or quick like Arab countries.

The language of presenting these ideas is very easy. (hmm) Sometimes even in Saudi, people don't want me to explain anything. So we got it. We got it (laughs). We understand what you're trying to say. Because I am an embodiment of their lived experience too right uh hmm, you know, we're especially for the same generation. But to go to a Spanish audience, just don't have the clueless, nothing. Who is this? What is this? Why is she doing this? And it's been a long journey for me to create an exchange with a new community that is looking also at my art in a different way. And there was emotional responses. There were a lot of questions. uhmm Yes, people want to collect my work and live with it, although it's so different from their own personal experience, which I think really it's just been such a unique journey to make art in a place that is not comfortable.

Right. Right.

And then on top of it, to explore a topic that is just you can't really grasp. It's not there. You can almost touch it but you can't, it dissipates very quickly, which is, what does it mean to look at a new tomb or look at an engraving by some of the sculptures that I've seen that have been excavated, are just so stunning and beautiful. Who's the artist that made this uh hmm and made it with such emotion? And what is my connection as a maker today to this maker? uh Only lives in my imagination in my DNA, in my ancestry.

Oh, wow.

And so this is what these artworks are really trying to resolve. They're not resolved. And there will be more chapters moving forward as I get closer to bringing this massive artwork to the community of Anuda.

Wow. I love that you said that those emotions live in your DNA, those histories live in your DNA, those relations. It's back to that idea about embodiment. So my last question is, uhm so imagine you're speaking to young women artists or young women who are thinking, you know, have inclinations towards artistry. What advice would you have for emerging women artists either coming from your community or just in general?

I'll just speak to in general because (uh hmm) like we had discussed before, traveling has opened my eyes to the experience of women around the world. yes And we are very much similar in our experiences to the point, I can't believe that we can't see it. And I feel that maybe patriarchy, uh hmm maybe the forces out there that want women to remain in their extremely gendered roles has created these divisions. hmm And the worst enemy for women today is ordering each other Hmm!. And so my experience is very different than yours in the States and that you, American women, you know, think that Arab women, you know, are very different, but we are not. We are so similar. It is, of course, there's nuances, there's culture, there's tradition, all that, but in reality, Women are still being, their bodies are still being used as tools to politicize, violence exists for women and girls everywhere in the world. yes. And therefore, when you ask me if I speak to a specific group of women, I say, no, I speak to all (lovely) in my art and in my heart.

Yes.

So and I have to snap my fingers on that ordering each other is our worst enemy. Oh my gosh, if you were here, we'd be snapping fingers in this room (laughs).

Oh yeah. So making art and being successful are very different things. So for me, if you feel that you are an artist and you've declared yourself in your heart that you're an artist, go for it. Make art. Make art. Now to be successful in art, that's a different thing. It's a market. It's a network. It's a, it's just like being an entrepreneur in the sense that you have to have multiple skills. You have to be good with money. You have to be good with negotiations, contracting, you have to be a

lawyer (laughs). They don't teach any of this in art school. And let me tell you, and I've been to art school and I've been to business school and they do not talk to each other and that's why it's so complex to get into the art world and the art economy because you need so many skills to break into it. Uh hmm But it doesn't mean you can't. Women are very, very smart. Uh They're intellectuals and they're very hard-headed and ambitious and this is really, really important. You got thick skin. This is one very important because you will receive a lot of no answers, you will receive very hurtful words or actions. Hmm And you need to brush it off and continue because if you have a vision hmm who you are and what you are and what you want to accomplish, just follow that vision and things will fall into the way they should fall into uh hmm. But I can't say it's easy. That's what I big warning. Making art is soul wrenching and and hurt it hurts and makes you cry, makes you smile, makes you sad. You think about things that a lot of people are, you know, living their days happy oblivious. And you are there thinking about, you know, climate change and women's rights and every country you visit. And it becomes a very heavy burden. Uh hmm But also, you will become very, very enlightened. Art has taken me to beautiful places and conversations. I've spoken to astronauts about the concept and philosophy of solitude. I've traveled the world just last year. I've been around the world twice hmm just because art demanded that. Otherwise, I would have loved to stay on my sofa (laughs) and watch TV. But, you know, art brings me out there and forces me to see and and absorb and understand and build a relationship with this planet and myself. So, advices have hard skin (laughs), very hard skin. constantly educate yourself, be powerful through knowledge, and always remind yourself that whatever circumstance that you're living in or experiencing as an artist or as a human, you know, there's a larger world out there. Go explore it.

Absolutely. Wow. I am uh just kind of like buzzing on some of the things that you've been saying today.

I want to call you Professor Aldoiloyan (laughs). Thank you so much, Manal. This has been really enlightening and I'm just so grateful for the time that you've shared with us and sharing and discussing your work and your inner and exterior work and uhm your artistic production. So thank you so much.

Thank you so much. Thank you for this lovely opportunity to talk to you guys.